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GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Date: 9/27/2018

GAIN Report Number: BE1802

Belgium

Post: Brussels

Belgium Adopts Nutri-Score for Front of Pack Nutritional Labeling

Report Categories:

Policy and Program Announcements

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Report Highlights:

The Belgian government announced in late August 2018 the introduction of a voluntary scheme for front of pack nutritional labeling. Belgian retailers started the rollout of this new scheme in September.

General Information:

On August 23, 2018, the Belgian Minister for Public Health, Ms. Maggie de Block, announced that the government would introduce a front of pack nutrition labeling scheme in Belgium.

The Belgian government decided to use the Nutri-Score scheme, developed by the French government and in place in France since October 2017. The system aims to inform consumers about the nutritional quality of a product. It is based on a color-coded scheme associated with letters from A to E. Each product is thus positioned on a scale of five levels ranging from:

- the most nutritionally favorable product (class A)
- the least nutritionally favorable product (class E)

A larger letter on the logo highlights the category to which the food belongs.



Source: Belgian Minister for Social Affairs and Public Health

The Nutri-Score scheme was launched on a *voluntary basis*. U.S. exporters to Belgium will not have to comply with it if they do not desire to.

Stakeholders reactions:

Two major retail chain, Ahold Delhaize and Colruyt, have committed to start rolling out the Nutri-Score to their private label lines before the end of 2018. Delhaize stores have started to carry food products with the scheme since the beginning of September.

The Belgian consumer organization Test Ankoop welcomed the announcement and noted that this is an important step to fight against unhealthy food.

The umbrella organization representing Belgian food manufacturers was not as enthusiastic and expressed concerns about the over simplification of nutritional labeling and guidance.

Background:

In the European Union, the European Regulation on Food Information to Consumers (2014) recognized the usefulness of front of pack labelling and gave the opportunity to food business operators and Member States to develop schemes if some criteria (not misleading consumers, respecting scientific evidence, being the result of a consultation) were met.

So far, Member States have developed three different schemes:

- the Nordic “keyhole” scheme in Sweden and Denmark – Norway, which is not an EU Member State, also uses this scheme;
- the British “traffic lights” scheme;
- the French Nutri-Score, just adopted by Belgium.

The Commission has until the end of 2018 to submit a report on the use of front of pack nutritional labeling, their effect on the internal market and the advisability of further harmonization at the EU level.